



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Recommendation for Incentive Award

Instructions:

1. Awards should be based on EPA policy for award types, amounts and approval level (signature) requirements. For additional information on approval level requirements for awards, refer to the EPA Delegations Manual.
2. For detailed information on awards, review the EPA Recognition Policy and Procedures Manual.
3. Complete this form for all Individual Cash Awards (award amount less than \$5000 and FY cumulative is less than \$5000), On-the-Spot Awards (FY cumulative is less than \$5000) and Time-Off Awards.
4. Attach the completed form to the electronic Request for Award. **For Use with FPPS Only – Do Not Send Hardcopy to SPO**
5. Provide a copy of the completed form to the employee when the electronic award has been processed.

Employee Name: Rachel Bassler Employee ID #: (b) (6)

Position Title (optional): _____ PP-Series-Grade (optional): _____

Organization (optional): R5/OEC

Type of Award: ☐ On-the-Spot Award (Individual Cash Award (Non-Rating Based)) ☐ Group Cash Award
☒ Individual Cash Award (Non-Rating Based) ☐ Group Time Off Award
☐ Time Off Award

Total Amount of Award (\$): \$975.00 AND/OR Total Number of Hours: _____

Type of Benefits on which the award is based (Cash awards only): ☐ Tangible Benefit ☒ Intangible Benefit

Value of Benefit:	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Substantial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional
Extent of Contribution:	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Extended	<input type="checkbox"/> Broad	<input type="checkbox"/> General

Narrative Justification for Award:

Rachel has made a valuable contribution to substantially improving Region 5's communications with the press and the public on several high-profile emergency response and time critical removal activities. She has been quick and tireless in drafting desk statements, following up on answers to the numerous press questions these activities prompt, and in taking the initiative to go to response sites at a moment's notice to assist on-scene coordinators. This was most evident during a recent chemical spill from a Northwest Indiana company which closed local beaches for days and garnered extensive press coverage. The Superfund program has expressed a high-level of confidence in - and appreciation of - Rachel's sound advice, reliability and unfailing professionalism.

As the Authorizing Official I certify with electronic signature (in FPPS) that all necessary concurrences have been gained for approval of this award in addition to verification that the award amount is not \$5000 or greater and that the FY cumulative award amount(s) for this employee is not \$5000 or greater.



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Employee Name: Rachel Bassler Employee ID #: (b) (6)
Position Title (optional): Public Affairs Specialist PP-Series-Grade (optional): GS-1035-13
Organization (optional): Office of External Affairs

Type of Award: ☐ On-the-Spot Award (Individual Cash Award (Non-Rating Based) ☐ Group Cash Award
☒ Individual Cash Award (Non-Rating Based) ☐ Group Time Off Award
☐ Time Off Award

Total Amount of Award (\$): \$3,150.00 AND/OR Total Number of Hours: _____

Type of Benefits on which the award is based (Cash awards only): ☐ Tangible Benefit ☒ Intangible Benefit
Value of Benefit: ☐ Moderate ☐ Substantial ☐ High ☒ Exceptional
Extent of Contribution: ☐ Limited ☒ Extended ☐ Broad ☐ General

Narrative Justification for Award:

This award recognizes Rachel Bassler's extraordinary efforts to help coordinate effective communications throughout the Agency's ongoing response to the drinking water crisis in Flint, Mich. Since October 2015, Region 5's Office of External Communications has devoted untold hours, days and weeks to providing Flint residents, the news media and public interest groups with clear, accurate and timely information on crucial public health issues. Rachel provided tireless assistance in the preparation of relevant, plain language text for a variety of written materials including - but not limited to - press releases, desk statements, talking points, fact sheets, web postings, social media and graphics - usually on very tight deadlines.

Starting in early 2016, Rachel volunteered for several stints at the Public Information Office in Flint where she often worked 12-hour days, seven days a week. Throughout the long and sometimes exhausting days, hours and weeks, she expertly assisted a variety of rotating Public Information Officers and the Headquarters Public Affairs Office on press issues, media interviews, press conferences, briefings and public meetings/events. Rachel also ably served as a liaison to the Unified Command Group, a highly challenging and demanding position that is key to the overall success of our mission to ensure a safe drinking water supply for Flint residents and protect public health. As a UCG liaison, she closely coordinated on key messages with partners from federal, state and local agencies along with representatives from public interest and non-profit organizations. All the while, Rachel continued high-level work on written materials - again on very short deadlines. Time and again during this unprecedented and critical mission, Rachel demonstrated a truly exceptional level of professionalism, dedication and credibility - earning her the respect, esteem and gratitude of colleagues in the Region, Headquarters and the UCG.

As the Authorizing Official I certify with electronic signature (in FPPS) that all necessary concurrences have been gained for approval of this award in addition to verification that the award amount is not \$5000 or greater and that the FY cumulative award amount(s) for this employee is not \$5000 or greater.



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Employee Name: Rachel Bassler Employee ID #: (b) (6)

Position Title (optional): Public Affairs Specialist PP-Series-Grade (optional): GS-1035-13

Organization (optional): OEC

Type of Award: ☐ On-the-Spot Award (Individual Cash Award (Non-Rating Based)) ☐ Group Cash Award

☒ Individual Cash Award (Non-Rating Based) ☐ Group Time Off Award

☐ Time Off Award

Total Amount of Award (\$): \$3,200.00 AND/OR Total Number of Hours:

Type of Benefits on which the award is based (Cash awards only): Tangible Benefit ☐ Intangible Benefit ☒

Value of Benefit: ☐ Moderate ☐ Substantial ☐ High ☒ Exceptional

Extent of Contribution: ☐ Limited ☒ Extended ☐ Broad ☐ General

Narrative Justification for Award:

Rachel is a consistently high-performer who makes valuable contributions to substantially improving Region 5's communications with the press and the public on high-profile Superfund emergency responses and removal activities. She is a self-starter who continually both seeks and creates opportunities for the Superfund program to 'tell its story'. She is a quick study and always anticipates --and meets -- deadlines in drafting desk statements, issuing announcements and scheduling events. Rachel is very persistent and meticulous in following up on numerous press inquiries during any given day or week --and ensuring that all relevant internal parties review and concur before issuing the agency's response. She also takes the initiative to go to sites as needed, at a moment's notice --if needed. Her successful and roundly-praised 3-week stint as public affairs leader in Puerto Rico during the hurricane response is a notable example of her commitment to EPA's mission and her willingness to go where she is needed and do what needs to be done. Region 5's Superfund program managers and staff have expressed confidence in her professionalism and appreciation for her enthusiasm and energy. Rachel's solid skills, unfailing professionalism, strong work ethic and good instincts are highly prized by colleagues in OEC, ORA, R5 Superfund, HQs OPA and OLEM.

☐ As the Authorizing Official I certify that all necessary concurrences have been gained for approval of this award.